

# UC Agriculture & Natural Resources

## 4-H, Youth and Family (includes home livestock)

### Title

4-H Building Health Advocacy Skills Project

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# 4-H BUILDING HEALTH ADVOCACY SKILLS



Building youth advocacy and leadership around health allows youth to have a voice in creating meaningful and sustainable change in their communities. This project requires that youth have a foundational understanding of basic nutrition and physical activity. In conjunction with UCCE health and nutrition programs, this project encourages youth to build on their knowledge to become teachers, public speakers and advocates for healthy living in their communities. Youth use these skills to become agents of positive change and engaged citizens by:

- Exploring the role of individual behaviors, social, and environmental influences on food choice and physical activity.
- Engaging in citizen science data collection, analysis and problem solving.
- Educating decision-makers on issues that impact their community.

Starting Out <i>Beginner</i>	Learning More <i>Intermediate</i>	Exploring Depth <i>Advanced</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track nutrition and log physical activity minutes for 1 week.</li> <li>• Ask your friends about their favorite foods; see if you can come up with healthier versions that use less added fat, sugar and sodium.</li> <li>• Learn about behavioral economics and choice architecture in school cafeterias (see Smarter Lunchrooms Movement).</li> <li>• Go on a walking fieldtrip. List things you encountered that make it easy to be healthy or difficult to be healthy.</li> <li>• Write a letter to your mayor or city council members about what you found on your walk.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research community advocacy or a famous community advocate.</li> <li>• Develop a survey to get feedback from other youth about a specific health or wellness issue (drinking water access, safe routes to school, time for physical activity, school menu, etc.).</li> <li>• Take pictures of places in your school/community where you don't feel healthy or valued.</li> <li>• Ask the Principal how to join your school or district wellness committee.</li> <li>• Explore the survey data and photo documentation with the wellness committee and brainstorm potential solutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify something in your community you want to change to make healthy choices easier (lighting in a local park, signs in the cafeteria).</li> <li>• Decide what data you need to collect to make your case for the change (opinion surveys, assessments, photos, etc.), collect and analyze your data.</li> <li>• Develop a presentation about what you want and why you think it is important.</li> <li>• Present research to decision-makers that have the power to create the change you seek (Principal, School Board, City Council, etc.).</li> <li>• Write a letter to the editor for your local newspaper advocating for the change.</li> </ul>

The activities above are ideas to inspire further project development. This is not a complete list.

## 4-H THRIVE

Help youth:

### Light Their Spark

A spark is something youth are passionate about; it really fires them up and gives them joy and energy. Help youth find how this project excites them.

### Flex Their Brain

The brain grows stronger when we try new things and master new skills. Encourage youth effort and persistence to help them reach higher levels of success.

### Reach Their Goals

Help youth use the GPS system to achieve their goals.

**Goal Selection:** Choose one meaningful, realistic and demanding goal.

**Pursue Strategies:** Create a step-by-step plan to make daily choices that support your goal.

**Shift Gears:** Change strategies if you're having difficulties reaching your goal. Seek help from others. What are youth going to do when things get in their way?

### Reflect

Ask project members how they can use their passion for this project to be more confident, competent and caring. Discuss ways they can use their skills to make a contribution in the community, improve their character or establish connections.



# Expand Your Experiences!

## Healthy Living

- Work with your cafeteria manager at school to develop creative names for menu items (i.e. x-ray vision carrots, California fresh burrito, etc.).
- Teach your parents about behavioral economics and show them examples at the grocery store.

## Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

- Create a map that shows a 1-mile radius around your school; plot all of the fast-food outlets and places to buy fresh fruit or vegetables.
- Survey your friends to find their favorite sugary drinks. Calculate how much sugar is in each drink and how long they would need to exercise to burn off those excess calories.
- Work with an adult to conduct a plate-waste study in your cafeteria to calculate how much food is being thrown out.

## Citizenship

- Organize a healthy canned food drive at your school; donate the food to the local food pantry.
- Organize a school garden work day to start or reinvigorate your school garden.
- Send photos and a story to a local newspaper about barriers to health and wellness in your community and/or things that youth are doing to create healthier spaces.

## Leadership

- Display your map, photos or presentation at Presentation Day, Food & Arts Celebration, club meetings or other approved public speaking spaces.
- Talk to your cafeteria manager about becoming a salad bar ambassador and teaching students how to use the salad bar to create delicious food.
- Teach others in your 4-H club about community advocacy and any successful changes you have made.
- Create a list of local decision-makers from your cafeteria manager to your mayor.

## Resources

- Walkability & Bikeability Checklists  
[www.walkbiketoschool.org/get-set/event-ideas/walkability-bikeability-checklists#download](http://www.walkbiketoschool.org/get-set/event-ideas/walkability-bikeability-checklists#download)
- Safe Routes to School  
[www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)
- National Nutrition Month Resources  
[www.eatright.org/food/resources/national-nutrition-month](http://www.eatright.org/food/resources/national-nutrition-month)
- Empowering Youth with Nutrition and Physical Activity  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/empowering-youth-nutrition-physical-activity>
- UC Davis CRC Putting Youth on the Map  
[interact.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/youth/](http://interact.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/youth/)
- Find your elected officials  
[act.commoncause.org/site/PageServer?pagename=sunlight\\_advocacy\\_list\\_page](http://act.commoncause.org/site/PageServer?pagename=sunlight_advocacy_list_page)
- National School Boards Assoc.  
<http://www.nsba.org/>

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### Connections & Events

**Presentation Day:** Teach others about community advocacy by sharing how you identified a problem, collected data, and developed a solution.

**National Nutrition Month (March):** Contact your Public Health Department to see what events being planned for Nutrition Month and how you can help.

**Parent Nights at school:** Display your photos or presentation at Open House night to educate parents and families about health and wellness advocacy.

**Contact your UC Cooperative Extension Office** to determine additional opportunities available.

### Curriculum

**Smarter Lunchrooms Movement**  
<http://smarterlunchrooms.org/>

**YA4-H!**  
<http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/projects/ya4-h/curriculum>

**Photovoice – Snapshots & Stories**  
<https://ucsdcommunityhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Snapshots-Stories-Photovoice-Resource-Guide.pdf>

**Mapping**  
[interact.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/youth/resources.html](http://interact.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/youth/resources.html)

### 4-H Record Book

4-H Record Books give members an opportunity to record events and reflect on their experiences. For each project, members document their experiences, learning and development.

4-H Record Books also teach members record management skills and encourage them to set goals and develop a plan to meet those goals.

To access the 4-H Record Book online, visit  
<http://ucanr.edu/orb/>

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